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TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [SW](#)

SUBJECT: SWEDISH CHARTER AIRCRAFT STARTS A REGULAR FLIGHT  
TO BAGHDAD

¶1. On January 2, Nordic Airways, a Swedish private sector company, flew its first flight to Baghdad, carrying 150 passengers to Baghdad International Airport (BIA). According to Swedish press, this marks the first commercial passenger flight from Europe to the Iraqi capital since the UN imposed sanctions on Iraq after Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Iraqi Transport Minister Amer Abduljabbar Ismail told journalists that he expects additional international flights in the next two days. Iraq's Transport Ministry signed a preliminary agreement earlier in the week with Air France-KLM that will allow Iraqi Airways to fly to European destinations, according to Ismail. The agreement also calls for BIA to be renovated.

¶2. In addition to this new Baghdad flight, Swedish charter companies have for several years flown to the northern Iraqi cities of Erbil and Suleimaniya. Sweden has Europe's largest Iraqi immigrant community, with official estimates of between 120,000 and 150,000.

SILVERMAN